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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
	COME-00	CTME-00	DINT-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00	MOFM-04
	MOF-03	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/018W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2638  
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
ASEAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
DEPTTREAS WASHDC PRIORITY  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J5/FPA// PRIORITY  
DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 HANOI 000965

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STATE FOR S/S-O, EAP, EAP/BCLTV, DRL, INR  
STATE ALSO FOR EB/ODF, EB/OMA, EB/OIA  
STATE ALSO PASS USTR  
NSC FOR EAST ASIAN DIRECTORATE  
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SECDEF FOR ISA/EAP STERN  
TREASURY FOR OASIA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/23/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [VM](#) [DPOL](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP HEADED BY MANH BODES WELL FOR ECONOMIC REFORM

REF: A) HANOI 952 B) HANOI 919 C) HANOI 890

11. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR JAMES BRUNO;  
REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

12. (C) SUMMARY: AS PART OF A MAJOR GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN SENIOR COMMUNIST PARTY RANKS, MODERATE NONG DUC MANH WAS OFFICIALLY INSTALLED AS VIETNAM'S SENIOR LEADER APRIL 23 AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINTH PARTY CONGRESS. AS EXPECTED, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHIEF MANH REPLACED THE STRONGLY IDEOLOGICAL LE KHA PHIEU. ONLY THE SIXTH COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER IN SIX DECADES, MANH IS THE FIRST WITHOUT REVOLUTIONARY OR WARTIME WORK EXPERIENCE, THE FIRST WITH A UNIVERSITY DEGREE, AND THE FIRST ETHNIC MINORITY. COUPLED WITH THE ABOLITION OF ALL PARTY SENIOR ADVISOR POSITIONS, THE RETIREMENT OF AGING CONSERVATIVES IN THE POLITBURO, A DRASTICALLY REDUCED LEADERSHIP PROFILE FOR THE MILITARY, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STREAMLINED SECRETARIAT TO PROMOTE EFFICIENCY, MANH'S ELEVATION MAY WELL PROVIDE A MUCH-NEEDED BOOST FOR THE ECONOMIC REFORM AGENDA.

13. (C) SUMMARY (CONT'D): PRIME MINISTER KHAI IS NOW JOINED IN THE TOP RANKS BY FELLOW SOUTHERN REFORMERS TRIET AND  
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DUNG, WHO WERE PROMOTED TO FOURTH AND FIFTH IN THE LEADERSHIP, SIGNALING THEY ARE HIS HEIRS IN WAITING. ANOTHER POSITIVE SIGNAL IS THAT REFORMIST TRADE MINISTER VU KHOAN, REPORTEDLY TO BE ELECTED A DEPUTY PM NEXT MONTH, WILL ACT AS VIRTUAL "POLITBURO CHIEF OF STAFF" WORKING ON THE NEW SECRETARIAT. THOUGH CONSERVATIVE INTERESTS STILL ARE REPRESENTED IN THE LEADERSHIP, THEIR PROFILE IS MUCH LOWER. ELECTION OF THIS LEADERSHIP WAS A MAJOR VICTORY FOR REFORMERS IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. END SUMMARY.

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MANH'S ASCENSION PART OF A DRAMATIC GENERATIONAL CHANGE  
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14. (C) THE SELECTION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAIRMAN NONG DUC MANH, 60, AS THE SIXTH GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM (CPV) IS AN IMPORTANT GENERATIONAL MILESTONE FOR THE PARTY AND COUNTRY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN VIETNAM'S POST-COLONIAL HISTORY, THE SENIOR LEADER WILL NOT BE A MILITARY OR CIVILIAN "VETERAN" OF THE COUNTRY'S

"NATIONAL LIBERATION" WARS. (TRUONG CHINH, LE DUAN, NGUYEN VAN LINH, AND DO MUOI ALL WERE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION THAT HAD LED THE FIGHT AGAINST THE FRENCH AND AGAINST THE U.S.-BACKED REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM GOVERNMENT. LE KHA PHIEU, 69, WHO RETIRED YESTERDAY, WAS A LONG-TIME MILITARY POLITICAL COMMISSAR WHO PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE IN VIETNAMESE OCCUPATION OF CAMBODIA, AS WELL AS SERVICE IN THE "NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE" STRUGGLE. PHIEU, WHO CAME IN UNDER UNPRECEDENTED PROCEDURES IN 1997, PROVED TO A TRANSITORY FIGURE AND WAS THE ONLY GENERAL SECRETARY TO FACE THE IGNOMINY OF NOT FINISHING A FULL TERM IN OFFICE.)  
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15. (C) MANH, OFFICIALLY INSTALLED APRIL 23 IN A "UNANIMOUS VOTE" BY THE 1,168 VOTING DELEGATES AT THE NINTH PARTY CONGRESS, WAS IN FACT SELECTED DURING THE PRE-CONGRESS MEETING OF THE CPV LEADERSHIP APRIL 16-17. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SOURCES, MANH POLLED A MAJORITY OF VOTES (FROM 55-60 PERCENT) BOTH IN THE PRE-CONGRESS AND THE FINAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, WHICH PRECEDED IT, THOUGH HE ONLY AGREED TO TAKE THE POST ON CONDITION THAT THE CPV'S THREE "SENIOR ADVISORS" WOULD STEP DOWN FROM THEIR POSTS. (IRONICALLY THIS WAS A KEY OBJECTIVE OF PHIEU'S, AND SEVERAL SOURCES SUGGEST THIS WAS ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT LED TO THE ADVISORS' PRESSING FOR HIS OUSTER.) NGUYEN VAN AN, CPV ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTOR, WAS THE OTHER POLITBURO MEMBER TO RECEIVE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR, THOUGH MANH'S BROAD POPULARITY AMONG CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, BUILT UP OVER HIS NINE YEARS OF SERVICE AS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAIR, APPEARS TO HAVE CARRIED HIM TO VICTORY. (REF A DOCUMENTS HOW MANH'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WORK, FOR WHICH HE HAS BEEN MUCH PRAISED BY HIS COLLEAGUES, SERVED TO BUILD A BROAD CONSTITUENCY OF SUPPORT FOR HIM.)

16. (C) THE GENERATIONAL CHANGE TO MANH IS STRIKING IN SEVERAL WAYS. NOT ONLY IS HE NINE YEARS YOUNGER THAN PHIEU, MANH IS A FULL GENERATION YOUNGER THAN DO MUOI, WHO ONLY 3-1/2 YEARS AGO WAS GENERAL SECRETARY. THE CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE CAN BE ILLUSTRATED BY THE FORMATIVE EVENTS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL LIVES: IN 1975 DO MUOI WAS IN HIS MID-50'S AND HAD DEVOTED THREE DECADES TO THE "NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE." PHIEU WAS A 43-YEAR-OLD POLITICAL COMMISSAR IN THE MILITARY. BY CONTRAST, MANH WAS ONLY 34 IN 1975, HAVING COMPLETED A DEGREE IN FORESTRY AND STUDIES IN LENINGRAD, AND WAS WORKING AS A FORESTRY OFFICIAL IN HIS NATIVE BAC THAI PROVINCE IN NORTHERN VIETNAM. MANH HAD BEEN A CPV MEMBER SINCE 1963, THOUGH HIS WORK DURING THE WAR YEARS WAS PRIMARILY TECHNOCRATIC.

17. (C) FOLLOWING HIS WORK IN FORESTRY, MANH MOVED ON TO TWO YEARS OF CPV POLITICAL TRAINING AT NGUYEN AI QUOC INSTITUTE, FOLLOWING BY A DECADE OF WORK IN PROVINCIAL CPV AFFAIRS. HE WORKED AS VICE CHAIRMAN AND THEN CHAIRMAN OF THE BAC THAI PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE, THEN SERVED AS PROVINCIAL PARTY SECRETARY THERE. HE BEGAN A CANDIDATE MEMBER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN 1986 (AT THE "DOI MOI" SIXTH CONGRESS) AND BECAME A FULL MEMBER IN 1989, WHEN HE WAS NAMED CHAIR OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S NATIONALITIES COMMISSION. (MANH IS A MEMBER OF THE TAY ETHNIC MINORITY, THE COUNTRY'S MOST POPULOUS MINORITY, AND ONE OF THE GROUPS MOST INTEGRATED  
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INTO ETHNIC KINH VIETNAMESE SOCIETY.) IN 1991 HE JOINED THE POLITBURO AND WAS NAMED CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THE NEXT YEAR. IN THE PAST NINE YEARS HE HAS PRESIDED OVER THE GRADUAL EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INTO A MORE GENUINELY DELIBERATIVE BODY THAT HAS INCREASED ITS ROLE IN DEBATING SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES AND QUESTIONING MINISTERS. (SEE REF A FOR FURTHER ON HIS ACTIVITIES AS ASSEMBLY CHAIR.)

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RETIREMENT OF ADVISORS, POLITBURO SEPTUAGENARIANS  
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18. (C) IF THE ONLY CHANGE COMING OF THE CONGRESS WAS THE REPLACEMENT OF THE HIGHLY IDEOLOGICAL PHIEU WITH THE MORE MODERATE MANH, THIS WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT SHIFT, THOUGH HARDLY AN EPOCHAL ONE. MANH GETS HIGH MARKS FROM HIS COLLEAGUES FOR BEING MORE PRAGMATIC, FOR BEING A GOOD LISTENER, FOR BEING LESS BOUND BY IDEOLOGY, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, HE IS A COMMITTED COMMUNIST, AND ONE WHO APPEARS NOT TO COUNTENANCE ANY RIVALS TO THE CPV'S ETERNAL MONOPOLY ON POLITICAL POWER. BUT WHAT MAKES THE RESULTS OF THIS CONGRESS FAR MORE FAR-REACHING ARE THE COMBINATION OF OTHER PERSONNEL AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES THAT WERE MADE. TAKEN TOGETHER, WE BELIEVE THESE CHANGES ADD UP TO A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR THE MORE REFORM-MINDED AMONG THE LEADERSHIP.

19. (C) PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE CPV'S THREE SENIOR ADVISORS ALL STEPPED DOWN FROM THEIR POSITIONS, AND THE CPV ANNOUNCED THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER SENIOR ADVISORS. IN A

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DRAMATIC SYMBOL OF THE PASSING OF THE TORCH, MANH PRESENTED BOUQUETS OF FLOWERS TO DO MUOI, FORMER PRESIDENT LE DUC ANH, FORMER PRIME MINISTER VO VAN KIET AND ALSO FORMER PRESIDENT (AND ANH'S PREDECESSOR) VO CHI CONG IN APPRECIATION FOR THEIR LIFETIME OF WORK. MANH ALSO EXCHANGED VALEDICTORY SPEECHES WITH PHIEU, AND THEY EXCHANGED FLOWERS AND HUGS TO SHOW ALL WAS "UNITY, UNITY, GREAT UNITY" AMONG THE LEADERSHIP. (NOTE: INTERESTINGLY, CONG WAS SEATED ON THE FRONT ROW OF THE DAIS BETWEEN PM KHAI AND MANH, AND THE FRAIL FORMER LEADER WAS HELPED ON STAGE BY MANH BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE CONGRESS' CLOSING SESSION. THE INCLUSION OF CONG AS THE FIRST OF THE FOUR ADVISORS THAT MANH ACKNOWLEDGED WAS TELLING: BY INCLUDING HIM, THE REMAINING SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE PHAM VAN DONG-NGUYEN VAN LINH TRIUMVIRATE THAT STEPPED DOWN IN 1991, MANH WAS SYMBOLICALLY PLACING MUOI, ANH AND KIET -- AND PHIEU AS WELL -- IN A LARGER GROUP OF CPV VETERANS AND SENIOR ADVISORS WHO WERE MOVING OFF THE STAGE. THE IMPLICATION WAS CLEAR: THEIR TIME HAD PAST, AND A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS WAS TAKING OVER.)

110. (SBU) IN REMARKS TO A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AFTER THE CLOSING SESSION, MANH REINFORCED THE GENERATIONAL TRANSITION THEME. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE SENIOR ADVISORS, THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY SAID THE CPV HAS GONE THROUGH "DIFFERENT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT" AND ONE PRINCIPLE THE CPV EMBRACES IS "THE SUCCESSION OF GENERATIONS." HE NOTED ALL THE SENIOR ADVISORS ARE "AGED" AND WHILE THEY CAN CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR IDEAS TO THE CPV AND ITS OFFICES, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE WILL NOT CONTINUE THE TRADITION OF HAVING ADVISORS.

111. (C) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOLITION OF THE SENIOR ADVISOR POSITIONS, MOST OF THE POLITBURO'S ELDERLY MEMBERS RETIRED. AS EXPECTED, SEVEN POLITBURO MEMBERS WERE DROPPED FROM THE BODY AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AS WELL: PHIEU, 69; FATHERLAND FRONT HEAD PHAM THE DUyet, 64; HO CHI MINH POLITICAL ACADEMY DIRECTOR NGUYEN DUC BINH, 73; DEPUTY PM NGUYEN MANH CAM, 71; ARMY POLITICAL DIRECTOR PHAM THANH NGAN, 62; NGUYEN THI XUAN MY, 60; AND CPV IDEOLOGY CHIEF LE XUAN TUNG, 64. BINH, CAM AND PHIEU WERE THE OLDEST MEMBERS OF THE BODY, AND AMONG THE SEVEN, ONLY CAM WAS A MEMBER OF PRO-REFORM CAMP. PHIEU, BINH AND NGAN, IN FACT, WERE AMONG THOSE MOST RESISTANT TO RAPID MOVEMENT FORWARD ON REFORM. (SEPTTEL REPORTS ON EMBASSY'S TRACKING OF THE OLD POLITBURO MEMBERS IN THE RUN-UP TO THE CONGRESS.)

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A YOUNGER POLITBURO WITH A STRENGTHENED REFORMIST BLOC  
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112. (C) THE NEW 15-MEMBER POLITBURO AND 150-MEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE ARE LEANER, YOUNGER, AND BETTER EDUCATED THAN THEIR 19-MEMBER AND 170-MEMBER PREDECESSORS THAT WERE APPROVED FIVE YEARS AGO. (THE NUMBERS OF THE OUTGOING BODIES WERE SLIGHTLY REDUCED BECAUSE OF DEATHS AND RETIREMENTS.) OVERALL, BOTH THE NEW POLITBURO AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE GIVE GREATER PROMINENCE TO REFORMERS, AND IN PARTICULAR IT IS NOTABLE THAT SOUTHERN REFORMERS NGUYEN MINH TRIET, HEAD OF THE HO CHI MINH CITY CPV, AND NGUYEN TAN DUNG, FIRST DEPUTY PM, WERE PROMOTED TO FOUR AND FIVE IN THE LEADERSHIP BETWEEN MANH, LUONG AND KHAI.

113. (U) THE NEW POLITBURO LINE-UP IN OFFICIAL PRECEDENCE ORDER:

- 1. NONG DUC MANH, CURRENTLY HEAD OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
- 2. TRAN DUC LUONG, PRESIDENT
- 3. PHAN VAN KHAI, PRIME MINISTER
- 4. NGUYEN MINH TRIET, HCMC PARTY CHIEF
- 5. NGUYEN TAN DUNG, FIRST DEPUTY PM
- 6. LE MINH HUONG, MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY
- 7. NGUYEN PHU TRONG, HANOI PARTY CHIEF
- 8. PHAN DIEN, DANANG PARTY CHIEF
- 9. LE HONG ANH, HEAD OF CPV CENTRAL CONTROL COMMISSION
- 10. TRUONG TAN SANG, CHAIR OF CPV ECONOMIC COMMISSION
- 11. SR. LTG PHAM VAN TRA, MINISTER OF DEFENSE
- 12. NGUYEN VAN AN, HEAD OF CPV ORGANIZATIONAL COMMISSION
- 13. TRUONG QUANG DUOC, HEAD OF CPV MASS MOBILIZATION

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-- 14. TRAN DINH HOAN, HEAD OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICE  
-- 15. NGUYEN KHOA DIEM, MINISTER OF CULTURE & INFORMATION

114. (C) THE NEW POLITBURO IS STRIKING FOR THE LOW LEVEL OF MILITARY PARTICIPATION, WHICH IS UNPRECEDENTED IN MODERN VIETNAM. THE ONLY MILITARY MEMBER REMAINING ON THE POLITBURO IS DEFENSE MINISTER PHAM VAN TRA, RANKED A LOWLY 11TH OUT OF 15, WITH ONLY AN AND THREE NEW MEMBERS RANKED

BELOW HIM. (FOR BOTH TRA, 65, AND AN, 63, IN PARTICULAR, IT IS STRIKING THEY WERE NOT ACCORDED THE RESPECT OF "SENIORITY" THAT NORMALLY IS ACCORDED THOSE IN THE POLITBURO OF ELDER RANK. IN THE OUTGOING POLITBURO THE SENIOR MEMBERS CAM AND BINH WERE ACCORDED A MORE SENIOR RANK JUST BELOW THE THEN FIVE-MEMBER STANDING BOARD, WHICH WAS ABOLISHED AT THIS CONGRESS. AT THIS CONGRESS, TRA AND AN WERE DROPPED UNCEREMONIOUSLY.) AS DOCUMENTED PREVIOUSLY, TRA WAS CENSURED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR "MANAGEMENT FAILURES" ONLY WEEKS AGO, AND INITIALLY THE EXPECTATION WAS HE WOULD BE DROPPED FROM THE POLITBURO. HE SURVIVED, BUT IN A WEAKENED POSITION, AND VIETNAM'S MILITARY IS LESS WELL-REPRESENTED THAN AT ANY TIME. (TRADITIONALLY, ONE OF THE THREE SENIOR POSITIONS IS OCCUPIED BY A MILITARY VETERAN, SUCH AS LE DUC ANH OR PHIEU.)

15. (C) A FURTHER "SYMBOL" OF TRA'S STATUS PERHAPS COULD BE INFERRED FROM WHAT APPEARED TO BE LAST-MINUTE REVISIONS TO MANH'S CLOSING SPEECH TO THE CONGRESS YESTERDAY. MANH, SITTING AT THE DAIS ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE HIS SPEECH, APPEARED TO WRITE CHANGES ON A MANUSCRIPT AND HE THEN PASSED THEM DOWN THROUGH KIET, CAM AND BINH TO THE END OF THE DAIS, WHERE TRA WAS SITTING ON THE END. TRA TWICE IN 15 MINUTES WAS FORCED TO GET UP WITH A PAPER AND WALK OFF THE STAGE TO HAND THEM TO STAFF. THOUGH PERHAPS THE LUCK OF THE DRAWER FOR THE GUY ON THE END, IT WAS STRIKING THAT ONE OF THE MOST SENIOR POLITBURO MEMBERS WAS A "GOFER" FOR THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY. IN ANY EVENT, THE VISUAL IMPRESSION WAS SYMBOLIC OF TRA'S REDUCED STATUS.

16. (C) AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, THE RETIREMENT OF ARMED FORCES POLITICAL COMMISSAR LT. GEN. NGAN WAS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE OF THOSE DROPPED FROM THE POLITBURO. MULTIPLE SOURCES REPORT HE, LIKE PHIEU, WAS DROPPED IN LARGE PART BECAUSE OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE USE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ASSETS AGAINST FELLOW POLITBURO MEMBERS. (IN COMMENTS TO THE PRESS AT THE CONGRESS, KIET SEEMED TO CONFIRM THIS PLAYED A PART IN PHIEU'S DOWNFALL.) (COMMENT: WHILE THE MILITARY IS SMARTING FROM THIS DEMOTION, THIS MAY  
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HELP SPUR PROFESSIONALIZATION AND GREATER CIVILIAN CONTROL  
OF THE MILITARY IN VIETNAM. END COMMENT.)

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THE FOUR NEW POLITBURO MEMBERS  
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17. (C) THE FOUR NEW POLITBURO MEMBERS ARE LE HONG ANH, TRUONG QUANG DUOC, TRAN DINH HOAN, AND NGUYEN KHOA DIEM. THESE FOUR ARE GENERALLY SEEN AS MODERATE OR REFORMIST, ACCORDING TO THE SWEDISH DCM, WHO HAS SERVED SEVERAL TOURS HERE. ANH WAS GIVEN INCREASED PROMINENCE IMMEDIATELY FOR SEVERAL REASONS: HE JUMPED THREE PREVIOUS MEMBERS -- SANG, TRA AND ANH -- IN PRECEDENCE TO NINTH OF 15, AND HE WAS SINGLED OUT DURING OTHER PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE CLOSING AS WELL. HE WILL HEAD THE NINE-MEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE INSPECTORATE, AND HE WAS LISTED SECOND TO MANH AMONG THE NINE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NEW POLITBURO SECRETARIAT (DESCRIBED FURTHER BELOW). ANH, WHO WAS BORN

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IN 1949 IN KIEN GIANG PROVINCE IN THE SOUTH, WILL BE AMONG THE YOUNGEST POLITBURO MEMBERS. UNTIL 1997 HE SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CPV PARTY COMMITTEE IN KIEN GIANG. IN 1997 HE WAS NAMED VICE CHAIR OF THE CPV CONTROL COMMISSION, MOVING UP TO THE TOP SPOT THIS WEEKEND. HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SINCE 1996. THE SWEDISH DCM, WHO HAS MET HIM SEVERAL TIMES, SAYS HE IS A STRONG ORGANIZER, AN "APPARATCHIK" WHO WILL FOLLOW ORDERS RATHER THAN AN IDEOLOGUE. SHE SAYS HE HAS A GOOD TRACK RECORD AND HAS MOVED UP QUICKLY IN CPV RANKS.

18. (C) DUOC, A REFORMER FROM DANANG, CAME UP THROUGH THE  
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PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE IN DANANG RISING TO PARTY BOSS THERE. HE MOVED TO HEAD MASS MOBILIZATION A YEAR AGO WHEN DIEN WAS MOVED TO DANANG AND TRIET MOVED TO HCMC FROM THE MASS MOBILIZATION SLOT. (TRADITIONALLY THE HEAD OF MASS MOBILIZATION IS IN THE POLITBURO.) THE SWEDISH DCM HAS MET HIM TWICE AND IS IMPRESSED WITH HIS COMMAND OF HIS PORTFOLIO AND HIS REFORMIST BENT.

19. (C) HOAN, 61, HAS SERVED AS "CHIEF OF STAFF" AT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICE SINCE JANUARY 1998. FROM HAI HUNG PROVINCE IN THE NORTH, HOAN WORKED FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES IN LABOR ISSUES AFTER RECEIVING A MASTER'S IN ECONOMICS FROM HUNGARY IN 1980. HE SERVED AS HEAD OF THE INSTITUTE OF LABOR AFFAIRS AND THEN AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT MOLISA (1981) AND DIRECTOR OF THE GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL DEPT THERE (1983). HE BECAME VICE MINISTER OF LABOR IN 1987 AND

MINISTER IN 1987, SERVING FOR THE NEXT DECADE. HE IS MARRIED WITH TWO GROWN SONS. ONE OF HIS DEPUTIES AT MOLISA (STRICTLY PROTECT) DESCRIBED HIM AS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF ECONOMIC REFORM AND LABOR REFORMS, AND HE IS EXPECTED TO BOOST THESE ISSUES ON THE SECRETARIAT. AS HEAD OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICE, HE WAS ONE OF THE MOST VOCAL IN THE RECENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS CALLING FOR PHIEU TO STEP DOWN, ACCORDING TO AN EDITOR OF "THE PEOPLE'S ARMY" NEWSPAPER. (ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, LE HONG ANH WAS ALSO VOCAL IN THIS REGARD.)

120. (C) DIEM, 58, HAS SERVED AS MINISTER OF CULTURE SINCE NOVEMBER 1996. FROM HUE CITY, HE STUDIED IN HANOI, "PARTICIPATED IN THE WAR IN THE SOUTH OF VIETNAM" FROM 1965-75 (ACCORDING TO HIS OFFICIAL CV), THEN RETURNED TO HUE, RISING TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE THUA THIEN-HUE CPV IN 1991. HE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE VIETNAM WRITERS' UNION AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION IN 1993. HE IS MARRIED WITH TWO DAUGHTERS AND A SON. THOUGH HIS MINISTRY IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH, ESPECIALLY AS IT ENFORCES CENSORSHIP RULES, THE SWEDISH DCM FINDS A SILVER LINING IN HOW HE PRESIDES OVER THIS HIGHLY IDEOLOGICAL PORTFOLIO. PERSONALLY HE IS "OPEN MINDED" AND IS PRAGMATIC WHEN RESOLVING THORNY DILEMMAS. SHE SAID HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE SWEDES GETTING APPROVAL FOR A CONTROVERSIAL FILM AT THE RECENT HANOI FILM FESTIVAL. BY HIS PORTFOLIO, WE EXPECT HIM TO BE INFLUENTIAL IN ENFORCING PROPAGANDA AND INFORMATION POLICIES OF THE CPV.

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SECRETARIAT EXPECTED TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

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121. (C) THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A NINE-MEMBER SECRETARIAT, COMPOSED OF FIVE POLITBURO MEMBERS AND FOUR OTHER CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, IS EXPECTED TO HELP PROMOTE GREATER EFFICIENCY IN CPV LEADERSHIP DECISION-MAKING. ANOTHER POSITIVE SIGNAL IS THAT REFORMIST TRADE MINISTER VU KHOAN, REPORTEDLY TO BE ELECTED A DEPUTY PM NEXT MONTH, WILL ACT AS VIRTUAL "POLITBURO CHIEF OF STAFF" WORKING ON THE NEW SECRETARIAT. (WE WILL REPORT FURTHER SEPTTEL ON THE

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SECRETARIAT.)

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122. (U) THE NINE MEMBERS OF THE SECRETARIAT AS ANNOUNCED IN PRECEDENCE ORDER ARE:

-- NONG DUC MANH  
-- LE HONG ANH  
-- NGUYEN VAN AN  
-- TRAN DINH HOAN  
-- NGUYEN KHOA DIEM  
-- LE VAN DUNG, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF  
-- MS. TONG THI PHONG, SON LA PROVINCIAL CPV CHIEF  
-- TRUONG VINH TRONG, DONG THAP PROVINCIAL CPV CHIEF  
-- VU KHOAN, MINISTER OF TRADE

COMMENT

123. (C) TAKEN TOGETHER, THESE PERSONNEL AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE CPV'S SENIOR RANKS LIKELY WILL HELP PROVIDE A NEW BOOST FOR THE ECONOMIC REFORM AGENDA. MANH IS A MORE  
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PRAGMATIC, RESULTS-ORIENTED COALITION BUILDER THAN THE HIGHLY IDEOLOGICAL AND XENOPHOBIC PHIEU. THE INCREASED DECISION-MAKING CLOUT AND PROMINENCE OF KHAI, TRIET, DUNG AND OTHER NEW REFORMERS IN THE LEADERSHIP -- WITHOUT PHIEU OR SENIOR ADVISORS GUMMING UP THE WORKS -- SUGGEST THIS BODY MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS MORE EFFICIENTLY AND PRODUCTIVELY. WHILE THE CPV'S CONSERVATIVE INTERESTS STILL ARE REPRESENTED IN THE LEADERSHIP -- HUONG OF MPS, TRONG OF THE CPV IDEOLOGUES, TRA OF THE MILITARY -- THEIR PROFILE AND CLOUT APPEAR TO BE MUCH LOWER. THIS IS STILL A COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP, OF COURSE, BUT THE BALANCE OF FORCES IS MUCH MORE FAVORABLE TO REFORMERS. WITH A VU KHOAN-MANNED SECRETARIAT PLAYING A BIGGER ROLE, WE ARE HOPEFUL THIS NEW LINE-UP WILL INDEED LIVE UP TO ITS POTENTIAL. IN ANY EVENT, THIS CONGRESS WAS A KEY VICTORY FOR REFORMERS HERE. END COMMENT.  
PETERSON

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